DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS SECTION

DPI/NGO/SB/90/25

A REPORT ON THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

(Not an official record or press release. This summary is made available to NGO representatives for their information and free dissemination.)

On 27 September 1990, **Mr. Pedro Roffe**, Representative of the New York Office of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and **Ms. Ruth Engo**, Liaison Officer, Secretariat of the United Nations Steering Committee for the Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, reported on the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held from 3 to 14 September 1990 at Paris.

The 41 countries classified as least developed by the United Nations are: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Togo, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu and Yemen (incorporating the former Democratic Yemen and Yemen, which merged in May 1990).

According to Mr. Roffe, the last decade was a major disappointment. Debt, inadequate external assistance, natural disasters, political unrest, domestic policy shortcomings and ineffective management had all led to the deterioration of economic and social conditions in the least developed countries. Despite commitments made at the first United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries in 1981, 11 countries had been added to the list of least developed countries over the last decade. While least developed countries had received preferential treatment as trade partners, external trade was a major source of economic growth for only a few of them.

To stop this decline, participants in the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries had adopted a Final Declaration and a new Programme of Action, by consensus, setting forth a comprehensive strategy for national and international action to be pursued in the 1990s.

The new programme stated that while the least developed countries had the primary responsibility for their development, each development partner should contribute according to its prominence in the world economy. The programme called for donor nations to provide 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their gross national product to the least developed countries. It also asked the international community to promote long-term growth, economic diversification, human resource development, land reform, and rural development. Donors were also requested to provide transfer of technology and skills, free access to markets, and debt relief.

The programme of action recognized that the least developed countries had to expand and modernize their economic base. It advocated private enterprise playing a larger role in achieving necessary economic transformation, with government playing a supportive role.

The programme outlined actions to integrate all groups, especially women, into the development process. It called for improving every individual's access to education, health care, and other services. It also advocated greater respect for human rights and endorsed moves toward popular participation, democracy, decentralization, and accountability at all levels of government. On the role of women, the programme recommended that schools and the media present realistic and positive images of women. It also urged governments to ensure women's full participation in decision-making at all levels.

The programme also called for the international community to assist the least developed countries to identify environmental problems and to prepare national conservation strategies.

In conclusion, Mr. Roffe said that the declaration and programme of action adopted at the Second United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries reflected the international community's commitment to reverse the marginalization of the least developed countries. He said that effective follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of the programme of action were essential and would be undertaken by UNCTAD.

Ms. Engo spoke next on the concerns of African countries, as well as on the role of women and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the Second United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries.

The Final Declaration adopted at the conference called for a review of the criteria for designating countries as "least developed". The United Nations General Assembly had identified 41 countries as the least developed, on the basis of their low per capita income, literacy rate, and contribution of manufacturing to the gross domestic product; some 28 were African. The number of least developed countries would rise, if Liberia and Namibia were added. According to Ms. Engo, Namibia could be considered a least developed country despite its relatively high per capita income of US$1,044. She said a large "pocket of poverty" existed in Namibia: some 75 per cent of its population had a per capita income of only US$63.

On prerequisites for assistance to the least developed countries, Ms. Engo said that African countries together with the Group of 77 opposed full privatization, believing that the state had to control certain "strategic sectors". She also said that the private sector in Africa was often foreign and did little to solve local problems. Ms. Engo said the African states, negotiating through the Group of 77, also viewed demands for democratization and greater respect for human rights as being a new conditionality for technical assistance. Bad government was a universal problem, not merely one affecting least developed countries. Ms. Engo said these issues should not be singled out as if lack of democratization were the sole cause of underdevelopment.

Ms. Engo said a women's caucus formed at the Second United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries focused attention on the necessity to increase women's power and ability to participate in the shaping of development. Few women had led delegations from participating countries. As a result of the caucus activities, a representative of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) had spoken at the conference.

Ms. Engo praised the participation of nearly 100 NGO representatives in the conference. According to Ms. Engo, NGOs were well-prepared for the conference and held briefings for delegates and journalists. NGOs also produced newsletters summarizing conference proceedings, as well as a booklet of proposals from NGOs. Ms. Engo proposed that NGOs be involved in the preparatory stage of future conferences, by participating in the preparation of draft texts or declarations and briefing the delegation of their home country. The Final Declaration adopted at the conference had also recognized the importance of NGOs in the development process. The declaration called upon NGOs to join others in the international community to assist least developed countries and to participate in the national and international monitoring of the programme of action.

Ms. Engo concluded by saying that the Second United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries had been well-organized and dynamic. She said she hoped there would be no need for a third conference. The welfare of the least developed countries would depend on action taken in the 1990s.

READEX FICHE

UNITED NATIONS

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS SECTION

DPI/NGO/SB/90/26

POLITICAL ISSUES BEFORE THE FORTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(Not an official record or press release. This statement is made available to NGO representatives for their information and free dissemination).

On 4 October 1990, **Mr. Vasiliy S. Safronchuk**, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs, United Nations, briefed NGO representatives on political issues before the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Safronchuk said the NGO community embodies a vital component that links the World Organization with peoples everywhere, grass-roots organizations, special interest groups, academic institutions, and inter-governmental bodies.

During the past year, the major organs of the United Nations and the Secretary-General have remained preoccupied with the search for lasting solutions to outstanding problems. While there has been movement towards resolving many issues, others will require renewed efforts on the part of Member States.

A number of very positive developments affecting the global political environment have taken place in the past year--namely ending of the Cold War and transition from confrontation to co-operation; peaceful democratic revolutions in Eastern Europe and reunification of Germany. These fundamental changes in the world allowed the United Nations to achieve progress in some directions: attaining independence by Namibia; an agreement on a peace plan for Cambodia as elaborated by the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council; and marked progress towards the holding of a referendum in Western Sahara. However, the very serious international crisis in the Persian Gulf has developed which has brought us on the brink of war in this area. This crisis has overshadowed the current debate of the 45th Assembly.

The Assembly, at the request of Kuwait, has now added another item to its agenda, the 153rd, entitled: "Iraqi aggression and the continued occupation of Kuwait in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations." Thus far, speakers in the General Assembly plenary have, for the most part, been extremely critical of the invasion and occupation of Kuwait and supportive of the actions taken by the Security Council (thus far there have been eight resolutions of the Security Council on this matter). By these resolutions a system of comprehensive sanctions against Iraq was introduced and a machinery to verify them was established.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned changes in the international situation, one thing is self-evident: the emerging multi-polar world is increasingly relying on the multilateral approach in dealing with a variety of issues. Today's dilemmas, whether involving regional conflicts or the debt crisis, environmental degradation or problems of refugees affect not only individual countries and groups of them, but whole regions and often the world at large. Continuing conflict in one region means instability and insecurity in others. The rapid disappearance of rainforests in one corner of the world has human and political implications reaching far beyond national boundaries. Little choice is afforded to countries other than to work together to address common problems.

A major theme reflected on this year's agenda concerns peace-making and peace-keeping. The role of the United Nations is increasingly being sought in negotiated transitional arrangements, and in pursuit of permanent solutions to conflicts. Such a role includes the deployment of peace-keeping forces to oversee cease-fires, and the despatch of observers to supervise and or monitor elections. As recently pointed out by the Secretary-General, seven peace-keeping operations were launched by the United Nations in the past three years. In contrast, there had been a total of only fourteen such missions during the preceding forty years. It is well-known that the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) played a very crucial role in facilitating Namibia's transition to independence. It did so by assisting in the organization of free and fair elections for a constituent assembly, and by maintaining peace during the transition period. In Nicaragua, for the first time, United Nations observers were called on to oversee the conduct of an internal electoral process. A similar request has now been received by the United Nations with respect to a soon-to-be-held election in Haiti. An even greater role is now being considered for the United Nations in Cambodia, where it may have to go beyond supervising a cease-fire and elections and become involved in the interim administration of the country pending transition to an elected government.

As in previous years, the 45th General Assembly will have a lengthy agenda dealing with the whole range of global issues. Of the 154 items presently inscribed, about 74 of them can be considered to have a direct political input, involving relations between States, the peaceful settlement of disputes, disarmament, regional and collective security,and the strengthening of peace and security. Moreover, at least 19 of these same items, will be taken up directly in the plenary of the Assembly in light of their particular character and special political significance. Constraints of time will not permit me a thorough examination of all of these items in this briefing. I would limit my observations to the following items which I

believe will attract particular attention and which have already been seen by delegations as significantly affecting global peace and security.

The crisis in the Gulf has highlighted the situation in the Middle East which remains a major source of international instability and potential confrontation. At the core of the problem lies the question of Palestine. The Assembly has repeatedly affirmed in the past that no comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region would be achieved without the full exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable national rights and the withdrawal of Israel from territories occupied since 1967. The Assembly also emphasized that a comprehensive settlement can be achieved by an international conference on the Middle East with the participation of all countries and parties involved. The lack of progress in the peace process has resulted in the eruption of the intifadah in the West Bank and Gaza strip in 1987, which shows little sign of abating. The situation in Lebanon is also far from being settled as a part of this country continues to be occupied by Israel.

As mentioned earlier, the situation in the region has further been complicated by the Iraqi invasion and annexation of Kuwait and the resultant explosive situation that has now been created. The hope has been expressed, including during the current general debate of the Assembly, that the resolution of the current Gulf crisis could lead to progress in the resolution of the overall situation in the region.

Among other regional conflicts which remain until now unresolved and which remain on the General Assembly's agenda are the situations in Cambodia (item 32) and in Afghanistan (item 29).

The situation in Cambodia has preoccupied the United Nations for over a decade. In recent months, however, important developments have taken place in the negotiating process that indicate the possibility of resolving the conflict in that country peacefully.

After intensive consultations conducted during the course of this year, the five permanent members of the Security Council came forward with a settlement framework that dealt with the critical issues of the organization and conduct of elections, the country's sovereign representation internationally, and internal transitional authority. This effort has now brought a tangible result that will serve as the first step towards the holding of free and fair elections and national reconciliation. At the informal meeting of the Cambodian parties held in Jakarta on 9 and 10 September, the parties accepted the framework formulated by the five permanent members of the Security Council. As a result, they set up a Supreme National Council of Cambodia (SNC), which will be the embodiment of the independence, sovereignty and unity of Cambodia throughout the transitional period. While the SNC will represent Cambodia externally and occupy the country's seat at the United Nations and other international fora, it is expected to delegate to the United Nations all powers necessary to implement the comprehensive agreement reached, including the conduct of free and fair elections and the relevant aspects of the country's day-to-day administration in the interim period. The process of electing the Chairman of the Council is showing progress and it is hoped that Cambodia's seat at the UN will be filled by the SNC in the very near future. The Security Council, by resolution 668 (1990)

endorsed the settlement framework elaborated by its permanent members and encouraged the Secretary-General to continue assessing the resource implications, timing and other considerations relevant to the United Nations role in Cambodia.

In anticipation of the unique task that the Organization is expected to be entrusted with in the framework of the Security Council proposal for a comprehensive settlement, the Secretary-General established a Secretariat task force early this year and dispatched four fact-finding missions to the country, in order to gather information and data relevant to any eventual United Nations operation in Cambodia.

The Secretary-General pointed out in his report to the 45th General Assembly session that the United Nations would be prepared to assume any appropriate role it may be entrusted with but he strongly emphasized the need for such a mandate to be realistic, clearly defined and practicable in operational terms. He also stressed that sufficient resources should be put at the disposal of the organization in a timely and assured manner in order to ensure the efficiency and success of the operation.

In spite of the important step made in Geneva in April 1988 when the Agreements on the Settlement of the Situation Relating to Afghanistan were signed and despite the total withdrawal of foreign troops, which was duly completed in February 1989, a comprehensive solution of the Afghanistan problem has not yet been achieved. Slow as it seems, however, progress is being made towards forging the necessary international consensus among the Guarantors and the countries neighbouring Afghanistan. The efforts of the Secretary-General also focus on assisting all segments of the Afghan leadership to begin a political process leading to the establishment of a broad-based government. It is evident that a lasting settlement of the conflict that continues to be a source of immense suffering for the Afghan people can only emerge if the various internal political forces are prepared to come together and find a middle ground that can serve as the basis for national reconciliation and reconstruction. The importance of a conducive and supportive international climate in this respect is naturally of utmost importance.

With regard to the situation in Central America (item 28) it should be emphasized that the process started in 1987 by the five Central American leaders under the Esquipulas peace plan has in the past year borne some significant positive results and enabled the United Nations to play an important and expanded role.

The most outstanding achievement in the region has been the resolution of the armed conflict in Nicaragua. At the invitation of the Government of Nicaragua, made in March 1989, the United Nations Observer Mission along with other international observer teams, monitored the preparation and holding of free and fair elections in February this year. This was indeed a very significant development both for Nicaragua and the region on the one hand, and for the United Nations on the other. For the United Nations, it was the first time that the Organization undertook such an operation in an independent sovereign Member State, a development that has brought home the potential role of the United Nations in the peaceful settlement of disputes when the necessary political will and backing exist.

In the context of the Esquipulas Agreement the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) was established. ONUCA undertook the task of verifying the cease-fire between the Government and the Resistance forces and receiving and destroying the weapons of the members of the Nicaraguan Resistance.

In addition to these efforts, two major initiatives have been launched on the diplomatic front to resolve the problems in two other Central American countries. The first relates to the negotiations started under the auspices of the Secretary-General after the Geneva accords of April this year between the Government of El Salvador and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLNF). One result of the several rounds of talks that have so far taken place with the participation of the Secretary-General's representative, is the partial accord on a text regarding respect for human rights, which envisages a long-term nation-wide monitoring by the United Nations. The latest round, which was held from 13 to 18 September in San Jose, Costa Rica, could not make progress because of the divergent positions of the parties on the subject of the role of the armed forces. The efforts are continuing however, and the next round of talks is scheduled to be held before 4 November.

The second diplomatic effort concerns the process launched in March to end the conflict in Guatemala. An observer appointed by the Secretary-General has been attending the talks, which are being held under the auspices of the Guatemalan National Reconciliation Commission and has so far involved various political parties, and social forces of the country.

On the question of Cyprus (item 43) the United Nations has endeavoured to find a workable formula that would be acceptable to both the Greek and Turkish communities of the island and achieve a lasting settlement. In pursuance of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions the Secretary-General has made numerous good offices efforts to bring the positions of the two sides closer. A year ago these efforts had reached a critical stage in the search for an overall settlement that would safeguard the legitimate interests and meet the concerns of the two communities. Regrettably, however, the United Nations' efforts in this regard have not yet brought about the desired result in spite of the continued appeal by the Security Council for the two sides to show flexibility and to co-operate with the Secretary-General. In March this year, the Council urged that efforts continue toward a solution that provides for the establishment of a federation that will be bi-communal constitutionally and bi-zonal territorially, and last July it endorsed the Secretary-General's plan of action for completing the outline for an overall agreement.

The past one year has witnessed some important positive developments in South Africa (item 34) which could significantly contribute to the eventual dismantling of apartheid. The 16th Special Session of the General Assembly, held from 12 to 14 December 1989 on this question adopted a "Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in South Africa", which provided specific guidelines for the peaceful dismantling of apartheid and a programme of action. The Assembly urged the South African Government to take several concrete steps in order to clear the way for negotiations inside the country. The Assembly also made it clear that any steps aimed at relaxing the existing sanctions against South Africa would have to be preceded by "clear evidence of profound and irreversible changes" in the country's system.

In June this year, the Secretary-General sent a team to South Africa to assess the situation there and provide firsthand information on the latest developments in the country. In July, the Secretary-General reported to the Assembly that a process had started toward the dismantling of apartheid through negotiations but that the process was still at an early stage. The continuing contacts between the Government and the ANC resulted in August in the issuing of a Joint Declaration, which stipulated the drawing up of a plan for the release of ANC-related prisoners as well as the granting of indemnity to groups of persons in a phased manner.

On the negative side of the balance sheet has been the intensification in recent months of the violent clashes between supporters of the ANC and followers of the Inkatha movement, which have claimed many lives. This cycle of violence, with the accompanying allegations of complicity by elements of the security forces, could no doubt adversely affect the negotiating process if it continues unabated.

The above-discussed issues are the most important political issues on the agenda of the 45th session of the General Assembly. There are two clusters of other political issues which I would like to mention.

The first one comprises the issues relating to the zones of peace and co-operation in various parts of the world -- Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean, the South Atlantic and Antarctica.

The debate on these issues every year in the General Assembly reflects a growing interest of Member States in regional arrangements which can bring peace and stability to various parts of the world. Unfortunately, there are certain setbacks in this respect. Some members of the Western group, for instance, withdrew from the Committee on Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace and others did not participate in its work at the last two sessions of the Committee. This certainly does not help the Committee in implementation of its mandate -- to prepare for an international conference on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.

The second cluster of international security issues includes the Review of the Implementation of the Declaration on Strengthening of International Peace and Security (Item 71) and Implementation of the Declaration on the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace (Item 72), the Implementation of the Declaration on the Right of people to peace and Science and Peace.

The regular discussion of these issues broadens the concept of international peace and security; and helps to understand and evaluate the comprehensive multifaceted nature of this problem.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the post-Cold War period and the beginning of a new era afford the members of the United Nations a unique opportunity to strengthen their co-operation. The achievement of such co-operation would enable the Security Council and the international community, as a whole, to make an important contribution to the peace process in various areas of the world. Such a process has already begun. New challenges await the Organization. Let me express the hope that with Member States' support and your own support, the United Nations will make an even greater contribution to international peace and security.

UNITED NATIONS

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS SECTION

DPI/NGO/SB/90/27

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLE

Not an official record or press release. This summary is made available to NGO representatives for their information and free dissemination).

On 11 October 1990, Mr. Abdulrahim A. Farah, Under-Secretary-General, Special Political Questions, Regional Co-operation, Decolonization and Trusteeship, briefed NGO representatives on the 30th Anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to to Colonial Countries and People.

Only a few months ago, Mr. Farah said, we marked a triumphant vindication of the principles the Declaration enshrined with the advent of Namibia to independence. Our commemoration today must be informed by tribute to the men and women who gave its phrases and letters the flesh and the blood of life. The roots of the Declaration go back to the Charter itself, and in a sense to the second world war. It is important to appreciate this because those six years of war brought home to the door steps of colonial powers the very real dangers of deprivation of liberty, of national integrity and even of life itself. The trauma of annexation suddenly became very real in the context of what was happening in Europe. Just as the second world war was fought not only against Hitler but all that Hitler stood for, so too, the Charter sought to incorporate provisions that would not only preclude the possibility of further war but the factors and circumstances that often compelled it.

For virtually half a century, since the Berlin Conference in 1888, the partition of Africa had been defined between assorted colonial powers. In sharing the spoils these powers concentrated naturally on what they could extract from the land in terms of physical and human resources. They showed little sensitivity in history. As a result many societies were fragmented by irrational boundaries, some of which persist today.

My own country, Somalia, was partitioned among the colonial powers -- an illustration of the pattern not only in Africa but in other regions. I do not think it would be far-fetched to see in the agonies many newly independent countries are going through a direct connection between the history imposed upon them and the future they are seeking to create.

More than one third of the membership of the United nations today, some sixty fomer colonial territories, can be said to owe their freedom and nationhood to the recognition of the tenents of the Declaration which, in turn, derive so directly from the Charter of the United Nations itself. Three whole chapters of the Charter concentrate on Trust and Non-Self Governing Territories. Chapters XII and XIII on the International Trusteeship system specifically offer the possibility of independence as an alternative to self-government in the exercise of the right to self-determination by Trust Territories. However the Chapter on Non-Self Governing Territories, Chapter XI, only mentions self-government which administering powers are urged to promote through progressive educational, political, economic and social advancements of the peoples of the territories. This was recognized in some senses as a limitation or an ambiguity. Resolution 1514 of the General Assembly proclaimed the right of all peoples to self-determination "by virtue of which they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development". It also made specific provision for the transfer of all powers to peoples in Trust and Non-Self Governing Territories or all other Territories which have not attained independence "in order to enable them to enjoy complete independence and freedom".

The Declaration can thus be said to have enhanced and made more specific the thrust of the Charter. In addition, it codified several critical and important aspects of decolonization. It drew a tangible link between alien subjugation, domination and exploitation on the one hand and impediments to the promotion of world peace and co-operation on the other. It interpreted the right to self-determination as not only the free determination of political status but the free pursuit of economic, social and cultural development. And, perhaps most significantly, it stated unequivocally that inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence.

In 1961 the General Assembly constituted an institutional mechanism for monitoring the administration of Non-Self Governing Territories and the progress of peoples under colonial rule to self-determination. This was the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples which, understandably, is more readily known by its short-hand title "The Special Committee of 24". The Charter has vested in administering powers the responsibility to transmit to the Secretary-General information on economic, social and educational conditions in the territories for which they were responsible.

This information is reviewed regularly by the Committee of 24. Currently some administering powers, notably New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States, also submit information in regard to political and constitutional development. This forms the core of the material for consideration by the Committee although it is supplemented by a range of other and secondary sources, notably submissions by petitioners and published articles in the regional and international press.

The Special Committee today follows the application of the Declaration to 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories as well as the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. At its inception, there were 64 territories on its agenda. It reviews the list of territories to which the Declaration is applicable annually. Several of the territories are small islands, geographically isolated, sparsely populated with scarce natural resources and extremely fragile links with the rest of the world. Pitcarin, for instance, has a population of 48. I draw attention this particular aspect to underline the cardinal principle of the United Nations commitment to the decolonization process: that the exercise of the principle of self-determination should in no account be circumscribed by factors such as area, population or natural wealth.

But this illustrates also another point which I had touched upon earlier. The overwhelming majority of territories which once were under United Nations purview are today its sovereign members. My own country, Somalia, took no part in the negotiations that established the United nations in 1945 and yet the results of these negotiations, embodied in the Charter, had a vital effect on it. The Somali Republic, with a territory of over a quarter of a million square miles and a population of more than six million today, resulted from the merger of the British Somali land Protectorate and the former Italian Trusteeship Territory of Somalia in June 1960. This merger restored independence to a people who had lost it in the last quarter of the nineteenth century while European powers struggled for the control of Africa. Speculations are always difficult, and political speculations the most difficult of all, but I do venture to suggest that there would not have been an independent Republic of Somalia in 1960 were it not for the United Nations.

The Trusteeship System, under which the southern part of my country was administered for ten years, was in conception not new, for the League of Nations had operated the Mandate System since 1920. The essential idea behind both systems was to have an administering authority - normally a state with a considerable degree of political maturity - assume responsibility for the government of a territory and guide its people towards independence or self-government. This was to be done under international supervision, and according to the terms of a legal agreement loosely called a "sacred trust". It was, in fact, a highly complex and sophisticated arrangement.

The success of this system under the League led the framers of the Charter to envisage not only the continuation of the scheme under the United Nations, but also its expansion. Three categories of territories were to be considered as capable of government under trusteeship. First there were territories previously held under mandate; second, territories detached from states as a result of the Second World War; and third, any other territory voluntarily placed under the system by the state responsible for its administration.

As things transpired, however, the United Nations took over the first category of mandated territories - with the exeption of Namibia. It added only one territory in the second category - Somalia, which was detached from Italy for ten years. Not a single territory in the last, broad category was ever added to the Trusteeship System.

In retrospect, this must seem like a somewhat disappointing use of a well-tried and valued system. The idea of trusteeship was occasionally mooted for "problem areas" such as Trieste, Berlin and even the Congo. And it must be remembered that the Charter envisaged that the United Nations itself - not just a member state - might assume the actual administration of the territory.

Perhaps one reason why states were somewhat reluctant to make greater use of the Trusteeship System was the very much more stringent supervision exercised by the Trusteeship Council as compared with the old Mandate Commission of the League. Supervision, so necessary to ensure that the administering state was abiding by its commitments towards the territory, the people, and the United Nations itself, took the form of reports from the Administering Authority, petitions from the inhabitants - including oral hearings - and visits by a mission dispatched by the Trusteeship Council. Few would doubt that the system of supervision was highly effective and, indeed, the entire system of trusteeship has been so successful that it has virtually liquidated itself. One by one, territories have come into independence, and the face of the world has changed.

Many regard this whole transision as too rapid, as "irresponsible". Yet "irresponsibility" is a highly subjective notion: I have no doubt that the British believed the AMerican colonists to be "irresponsible" in 1776, just as the Spaniards believed this of those who sought independence for South and Central America in the nineteenth century. If there was virtue in a continuation of the trusteeship scheme, surely its demise is due as much to the reluctance of the larger powers to place their problem areas under trusteeship as to the demand for independence of areas already under trusteeship. Given a greater readiness on the part of the larger powers to use trusteeship, it might have become a transitional stage for many areas moving from colonial status to independence: but that opportunity was never taken. Such readiness could have cushioned many newly freed nations from too abrupt and often too violent, a change. I believe, therefore, that the Trusteeship System will go down as one of the most successful aspects of the United Nations Organization: and yet an aspect whose potentialities were never fully explored.

The driving strength behind trusteeship was the conviction that man had a right to be free and to choose his own political future. This same conviction has, in somewhat different form, been manifest in the application of Chapter XI of the Charter, the declaration regarding non-self-governing territories. Nor is this surprising. The essential <u>principles</u> which the Trusteeship System embodied made <u>sound political sense</u>, for they were based upon a concept of human justice and dignity, and of the fundamental right of mankind to freedom and self-determination.

The application of those principles could not be confined to the specific territories brought under the Trusteeship System by special agreement: the machinery of supervision might differ, but the essential principles which lay behind trusteeship were bound to be applied wherever those fundamental rights of man were in question.

Both Trust and Non-Self Governing Territories place particular responsibilities upon administering powers. The attitude of these powers today, as I have said, continues to be correct and responsible although there are often substantial areas of disagreement between their views and those of the Committee which must borne in mind. Only two days ago the United States representative in the Fourth Committee stated that the United States representative in the Fourth Committee stated that the Committee of 24 "must move with the times or become totally irrelevant". At the General Assembly last year,, the delegate of the United Kongdom stated that "for the few remaining British dependent territories the colonial era is over".

These are strong concerns and they must be faced. Indeed, the Chairman of the Committee of 24 himself remarked some months ago that while Committee's actions "continue to be guided by a full commitment to the principles contained in Resolution 1514, we have not lost sight of the fact that a great deal of realism and flexibility is necessary to fulfil the objectives of decolonization".

Indeed, such realism and flexibility has been evident in the thrust of United Nations activities in this regard. Decolonization, for instance, is not necessarily considered synonymous with independence but simply with self-determination. In 1984, for instance, in the exercise of this right the people of Cocos (Keeling) Islands opted for integration with Australia and ceased to be regarded as a Non-Self Governing Territory. The people of Western Sahara will soon have the opportunity to participate in a Referendum conducted by the United Nations to choose either independence or integration with Morocco.

Similarly realism has dictated that the United Nations effort should not address only the political or constitutional aspects of decolonization but its larger human face with encompasses economic, social, educational cultural activities. Since 1954, Member States have been invited by the General Assembly to offer technical and vocational training and post-primary and university education to peoples in Non-Self Governing Territories. In the unique instance of Namibia several activities, each wide in scope, were launched by the United Nations council for Namibia and the United Nations Fund for Namibia. Some of these, such as the Nationhood Programme, have been products as much of vision as of pragmatism. They have looked ahead to a free citizenry equipped with the skills required in the wake of their exercise of self-determination.

There has also been a manifest urging that the United Nations should concern itself with developmental challenges and obstacles faced by many of these territories. There has been anxiety both in the Pacific and the Caribbean, for instance, that some territories may unwittingly be involved in illicit activities, such as the trafficking of drugs or laundering of money or smuggling. Worry has also been expressed that too great a dependence on tourism, important though it is as a source of revenue, could have an effect of cultural disruption. Economically and ecologically, the effects of driftnet fishing in the Pacific region have been described by some as "devastating". It should, in this regard, be emphasized that the United Nations has a discernible role even in small territories which claim they are content with their non-self-governing status. The Deputy Chief Minister of the British Virgin Islands, for instance, has stated that the territory will "not be bullied, provoked, coerced or sweet-mouthed into independence".

However, in the course of the same statement, he expressed appreciation for the role of the Committee of 24 in urging administering powers to create conditions which would ensure economic and social development in their respective territories. On the other hand the Chief Minister of Montserrat has stated that most of the people of the territory would like political independence but are deterred by the lack of basic infrastructure. He has urged the Committee to convince the administering power of the need for aid and assistance which would enable the Territory to develop in a manner that would ensure its survival after independence, if this was the option eventually chosen.

These instances dramatize the potential and the lack of predictability in the times ahead. "Sea-locked" territories are isolated from the world outside by vast distances which even electronic communication has only begun to bridge. Many are single crop economies. Others are dependent upon extremely tenuous sources of revenue such as tourism. It is quite clear that the option for self-determination will become meaningless unless there is a tangible future independent of the present association with the administering power that can be looked forward to. It is this that represents the greatest challenge to the world community and it is a challenge all too easily glossed over by the more catchy political aspects. In the Caribbean, Non-Self-Governing Territories have worked together with independent States within the Carribean community on issues of vital developmental concern. The United Nations has been privileged to co-operate with this association. Such co-operation underlines its fundamental belief that regional associations and groupings are the most effective development constituency for such peoples. Similarly, at the request of the General Assembly a number of United nations specialized agencies have been intimately involved with aspects of economic and social development in these territories.

The Declaration codifies in practical terms the sense of responsibility the world community feels for each of its members. Does the United Nations today posses the capacity to provide "inspired leadership"? It can do no more, and no less, than its members decide it can. From the prism of the decolonization process it seems it can. The emergence of dependent territories to independent nationhood has not been without its trials, its tribulations and its agonies.

What about the future? There are some who would argue that the new entente in international affairs will slacken the decolonization process. This seems a terrible travesty and a disservice to the peoples directly involved. Certainly, the polemics and rhetoric may get a little less shrill but the substantive issue will ensure. Squarely put it is: who decides for whom? Administering powers have no more a right to determine the future of dependent territories than dependent territories can those of the administering powers. The United Nations too has no locus standi to decide. It is for the territories and themselves alone. There is no complex Euclidean logic involved here. And this thirtieth anniversary is, perhaps, the right point to begin the demystification of decolonization. "Give me the political kingdom", it was once said, " and all else will follow". Today there is recognition that the "political kingdom" by itself may not be enough. It must be prepared for and it may well assume a character other than that of straightforward sovereignty. We in the United Nations can only assist in that preparation and in urging that the character be freely determined by those who are to possess it.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS SECTION

DPI/NGO/SB/90/28

A REPORT ON THE EIGHTH UNITED NATIONS CRIME CONGRESS

(Not an official record or press release. This summary is made available to NGO representatives for their information and free dissemination.)

On 18 October 1990, Mr. Henryk Sokalski, Director, Social Development Division, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Office at Vienna; Ms. Virginia Saurwein, Chief, New York Office, United Nations Office at Vienna; and Ms. Yael Danieli, World Federation of Mental Health, briefed NGO representatives on the Eighth United Nations Crime Congress, held from 27 August to 7 September 1990 at Havana, Cuba.

Mr. Sokalski said Margaret Joan Anstee was Secretary-General and Eduardo Vetere Executive Secretary of the Eighth United Nations Crime Congress. According to Mr. Sokalski, the Congress was extremely well-prepared both by Member States and NGOs; was attended by more government delegations than any previous one (127); was the largest United Nations Congress (1,200 participants, many at ministerial level) and had an impressive NGO participation (more than 128). In addition to the first plenary, "Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the Context of Development," there were two committees and two workshops, one on alternatives to imprisonment, another on computerization of criminal justice systems. There were 16 ancillary meetings, computer demonstrations, exhibits and film projections.

The Congress adopted more instruments and resolutions than all the previous congresses combined, including such urgent but sensitive areas as organized crime, terrorism, offenses against the environment and against cultural patrimony, computer crime, the human rights of victims and prisoners, and improved management of criminal justice system. etc. The Congress focused on ways of strenghthening international co-operation against increasingly sophisticated dimensions of crime. The way in which negative phenomena have compounded in recent years should be viewed in geometrical rather than arithmetical progress steps, according to Mr. Sokalski.

The Congress adopted five model treaties: on extradition, mutual assistance, transfer of criminal proceedings, transfer of supervision of released offenders, and on cultural patrimony. Member States were very active in bringing a final consensus on those subjects. Several new basic principles were established: 1. The use of force and firearms by law enforcement officials; 2. The role of lawyers; 3. The role of prosecutors; 4. Alternatives to imprisonment (the so-called "Tokyo rules"); 5. Prevention of juvenile delinquency (the so-called "Riyadh rules"); and, 6. The rules for juveniles deprived of liberty. All decisions were passed by consensus.

In Mr. Sokalski's opinion, the Congress was a major success; it tracked new ground and stressed the gap between the extensive world-wide needs in the crime field and the limited United Nations capacity to respond to them, and called for effective steps. Lacking both staff and financial resources, the United Nations is extremely grateful to the governments and NGOs which offered invaluable assistance in the preparatory process.

The draft resolutions were submitted to the Third Committee of the General Assembly. An extensive three-day debate on the Congress results is expected to start on the 29 October. There will be three reports before the General Assembly: 1. The long report of the Congress; 2. The report of the Secretary-General on the Congress recommendations and what the Secretary-General thinks should be done; and, 3. The report on the status of implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Seventh Congress in Milan.

Speaking of the preparations for the Eighth Congress, Mr. Sokalski said that in three years, 30 ad hoc meetings of experts were organized and co-sponsored, in addition to 10 preparatory meetings at the regional and inter-regional level. A staff of eight people prepared a total of 1,000 document pages for the Congress. According to Mr. Sokalski, the lesson learned at the Congress was that in this age of transnational crime, we cannot succeed by fighting it alone, be it single-handedly by Member States or by the United Nations. Only the joint action of States can make real inroads. The instruments for mutual assistance in criminal matters, extradition, transfer of criminal proceedings, of the execution of sentences, provide a legal framework within which practical arrangements for collaboration can be effectively pursued. Mr. Sokalski concluded by saying that a 1991 ministerial summit on crime prevention and criminal justice is to be held in Japan, with financial assistance from the host country.

Ms. Saurwein emphasized the importance of the ancillary Congress meetings, which are sponsored by NGOs. These meetings provide technical information about the various Congress issues, and were very well attended. She also pointed to the frequent call for NGO action in the implementation of Crime Congress resolutions, for example in the area of community participation in corrections. Local NGO forces are crucial in helping prisoners adjust back to community life and in establishing crime prevention programmes.

Topics of the ancillary meetings at the Eighth Crime Congress included "Priorities for Penal Reform," "Wating for Justice - Conditions for Prisoners awaiting Trial," "Prevention and Prosecution of Computer Crime," "Domestic Violence," "The Role of Education in the Field of Criminal Justice," "Strategies for Increasing the Use of Alternatives to Imprisonment"and "The Implementation of the Basic Principles Embodied in the United Nations Declaration of Victims." According to Ms. Saurwein, the Congress was closely tied to major upcoming United Nations events, with special emphasis on children. The question of crime and its relationship to development also received special attention.

Ms. Danieli spoke highly of the spirit of co-operation among the United Nations, Member States and NGOs in the preparations and organizing of the Eighth Crime Congress, and commended the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the United Nations Office at Vienna for the success of the Congress. During the Congress, some governments designated 1995 as the "International Year of the Rehabilitation of Offenders." Ms. Danieli pointed to NGO persistence in emphasizing to the United Nations and world community that every crime has a victim, that victims have rights. She suggested that the 1995 International Year title, if it is adopted by the General Assembly, be changed to the "International Year of the Protection of Victims and the Rehabilitation of Offenders."

Ms. Danieli invited all interested NGOs to join in the NGO Alliance on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which meets on the second Friday of each month.